

13. "Living hope" seems to make is something active, present and real, not just something theoretical and remote. A living hope is part of our lifeblood as Christians. Therefore it is about now, about living in the present but looking to the future.

14. Our future blessings are kept in heaven for us. If your Aunt Mabel has promised you her collection of Victorian antimacassars you might be worried they will be faded, stained or partly moth eaten before you get your hands on them. But our inheritance in heaven is imperishable, undefiled and unfading - not only whilst we wait to receive it, but once we have it.

15. Paul uses similar language to explain what our resurrection bodies will be like, they are not identical to our present bodies, but it will be a bodily resurrection not just a spiritual one, and our resurrection bodies will be imperishable etc even though our present bodies be et up by t'worms.

16. This verse seems to link us in to what follows. Peter is going to talk about the trials believers face. Knowing that God has begun a work in us we should have confidence that he will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1.6). Here in verse 5 Peter says that it is the power of God that will guard us, implying that we are guarded through the trials he will go on the mention. But Peter also underlines the necessity of faith, because we are guarded through faith. It is not really the strength of our faith that guards us, but the power of God, through faith.

*David Phillips,
September 2016*

The First letter of Peter

LEADERS NOTES

Week 1

These notes were not originally written to accompany a sermon series on 1 Peter. Instead sermons on 2 Peter were being preached. However, during Covid there was a series of shorter sermons on 1 Peter.

1. This question may be difficult for people not familiar with the gospels but as the studies were run in conjunction with a series of sermons on 2 Peter there were also readings at those services from the gospels which mentioned well known incidents involving Peter.

4. The opening verse has caused discussion about who Peter was writing to. Some have suggested that he was writing to Jewish believers but 1 Pt 4.3 seems to indicate more that he was addressing Gentile believers. The general view has therefore been that Peter is using language often used of the Jews but applying it to Christians whatever their ethnicity.

Elect - meaning that they were chosen by God

Exiles - used in Hebrews of Old Testament believers who lived by faith, having the promises but not having received their inheritance. This fits with what Peter goes on to write about that we have a living hope but the inheritance is kept in heaven.

Dispersion - this term was used to describe Jews but calling them "exiles of the dispersion" seems to drive home the point that the Christians are now scattered about as foreigners whose true citizenship is in heaven.

The questions draw attention to the Trinitarian nature of what Peter writes about God the Father, the Spirit and Jesus Christ. It will be possible to get quite tied down on the various words that follow and

how they all fit together in particular about what happens when. it might be easier just to concentrate on the essence of the things that are said.

4a Foreknowledge might mean that God knows who will respond to the gospel but given that it follows on from “elect” it makes more sense to say that God knows beforehand who He will call.

4b Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit and can refer to a work of the Spirit in us when we are born again, or the ongoing work of the Spirit through our lives as we seek to be holy and walk in step with the Spirit, or both.

4c Obedience might seem an odd word to use yet can be seen as obedience to the call to follow Christ, and obedience shown in love as per John 13.

Sprinkling with his blood of course has to do with how we are cleansed of sin by Christ’s sacrificial death for us.

5. I struggled to find examples of this but I have heard people objecting to the idea of being “born again” despite the fact that it is in the Bible.

I’m not sure of the history of the term but “born again” is used in the 1611 King James translation. Some associate it with the evangelical movement beginning with Whitfield and the Wesleys, but it must have been common before then. More recently people may associate it with the ministry of Billy Graham but even in 1901 Bible translations were preferring other language to “born again”.

I suspect many people, especially those who are religious are as shocked as Nicodemus was to hear Jesus say that our lives need to be completely transformed, begun again, by the power of God and that without this we cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

6 & 7. In both passages the initiative lies with God. Peter talks about God causing us to be born again, whilst Jesus says it is a work of the

Holy Spirit who blows where He wills. In both descriptions the person seems to be passive.

8. However, Jesus goes on to talk about the necessity of believing in order to be saved.

The relationship between faith, being born again and also baptism has been contentious.

The early Christians seem to have fairly consistently taught that being born again is the same as being baptised where it was not just water baptism, but also by the Spirit.

Roman Catholics follow this but seem to put the focus on water baptism and take away the necessity for faith which we see in John 3.

Billy Graham and others have been accused of suggesting that a person’s decision to believe is what causes them to be born again, which seems to put the emphasis on them not the Spirit.

Classical protestant (including Anglican) teaching is that because we are spiritually dead we need to be born again of the Spirit before we can respond to the gospel. When the Spirit is at work then baptism is not just a sign, but a seal of the new birth.

9. I should have included with these questions 1 Peter 1.23 which talks about being born again through the living and abiding word of God. Our part, as Paul shows in Rom 10.14-15 is to preach the good news because unless they hear they cannot believe and call upon Christ and be saved.

11. Hopefully clear:
to a living hope...
to an inheritance...

& 12. The former seems to be present but with a clear eye on the future, the latter is a future blessing.